

Hugh Thomas – 1929-2016



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Former Lake Valley Fire Protection District Chief Hugh Evan Thomas died July 17, 2016. He was 86.

Thomas was born Dec. 4, 1929, in Prentice, Wisc., to Ivan and Lillie Thomas. He graduated from Prentice High School and immediately entered the Merchant Marine Academy in New York. After two year he then joined the Army. He spent a tour in Europe doing post-war cleanup and reconnaissance.

After leaving the Army, he moved to Northern California and worked as a logger. His logging career was cut short by a major accident. Soon thereafter, he met Janet.

After getting married and having kids, the couple decided to leave Smith River for an opportunity to raise their children in Tahoe. Thomas started a job with the state of California as an agricultural inspector. When the "bug station" closed, he started his favorite career as a firefighter, where he rose through the ranks to retire as fire chief of Lake Valley.

After retirement, the couple moved to Grass Valley, spending most winters in Arizona in their fifth-wheel.

Thomas was an honest, principled man who was proud of his Scottish/Welsh heritage. He was a member of two clans and attended Scottish Games anywhere within driving distance. He was a train enthusiast and would find the nearest train tracks and sit for hours watching them pass.

When his wife became ill with Alzheimer's disease, he lovingly cared for her almost single-handedly for 10 years until her passing. He was also preceded in death by two brothers, Raymond and James.

Thomas is survived by his children, Randy Thomas (Andrea), Scott Thomas (Cathie), and Shelley Muller (Tom); brother, Griffith (Shirley); several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Services will be July 29 at 11am at the United Methodist Church, 620 North St., Woodland. A reception will follow at the home of his daughter and son-in-law.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Mayo Clinic, Designation: Alzheimer's Disease Research; or St. Jude's Children's Hospital.